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ABSTRACT

Guilford Technical Community College (GTCC) received a grant to establish a centralized unit for job development, placement, and data monitoring that could serve as a model for the North Carolina Community College System. The first goal of the project was to establish a centralized method for collecting, recording, and maintaining job placement data. Emphasis was placed on centralizing information about placements rather than on the function of placement. Next, a survey of early school leavers was developed and piloted as part of an effort to develop an evaluation model to determine the success of GTCC in providing true marketable skills for early leavers. Project staff worked with faculty, staff, students, and area employers to develop graduate followup, student employment, and exit surveys dealing with curriculum, jobs, and placements. A fourth aspect of the project involved the development of strategies and procedures for compiling and analyzing institutional data relating to jobs and placements. The fifth goal of the project was to assist instructional departments in evaluating program effectiveness. Because the project was subject to a 12-month time frame, it was decided to postpone any program evaluation activities until project staff could develop strong working relationships with GTCC faculty. (MN)

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Occupational Education Research Project Final Report

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A CENTRALIZED INSTITUTIONAL UNIT FOR JOB DEVELOPMENT, PLACEMENT, AND DATA MONITORING

ED267234

GUILFORD TECHNICAL COMMUNITY COLLEGE
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FOREWORD

The North Carolina Community College System has steadily expanded to meet the increasing needs of a growing and changing state. A similar pace has not been maintained in systematically placing and monitoring the graduates and early leavers of the community colleges.

The 1982-1983 Student Development Services Staff Roster, published by the Department of Community Colleges, lists only five schools in the Community College System which designate someone whose full-time professional duties are in job placement. Approximately a dozen schools list it as a part-time duty, coupled with other student activities functions. This leaves some forty schools that do not list the function at all as a descriptor in a job title. Most students, therefore, find their own jobs by other means, sometimes with the assistance of departmental or faculty contact. While much in a positive sense can be said for these placement approaches, the negative side is that only rarely does the school itself have documentation of the training-employment connection except as a theorethical concept.

The Department of Community Colleges, recognizing the need to address institutional program adequacy as it relates to the local job market, funded a grant project at Guilford Technical Community College (GTCC) to establish a centralized unit for job development, placement, and data monitoring. The procedures developed in the project are intended to serve as a model for the Community College System. Specific procedures will vary from institution to institution depending on size, curriculum offerings, geographic location and other variables. The model is intended to be fluid enough to allow modifications appropriate to the individual institution. Adapting this model to

local needs and specifications is appropriate and encouraged. Replication of materials in the Procedures Manual is also encouraged.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Typical of most long term projects, this endeavor owes its success to the contributions of many people. The author of this report recognizes with gratitude and appreciation the following individuals:

- Dr. Al Lochra, Director, Student Aids, GTCC, who as project director had the foresight to conceive of this project and author the grant proposal. His advice and assistance through the progress of the project allowed for smooth realization of the project goals.
- Jo Clise, Clerical Assistant to Job Placement, who did so much more than provide clerical support for the project. Her organizational skills were put to the test in the implementation of the coordinator's ideas and plans.
- Susan Hall, Secretary, Student Aids, who on many occasions typed materials for the project.
- Dr. Raymond Needham, President; Dr. Don Cameron, Vice-President; and Martha Hickey, Dean of Student Development and Instructional Support, GTCC, whose commitment to and support of the project were demonstrated on numerous occasions. Their public support represents the institutional commitment which must be present for a successful job placement program.
- Anne Banks, Duplicating, GTCC, who enhanced the professional quality of the project's print resources and who more than once accomodated deadlines.
- GTCC's faculty, who cooperated fully with the coordinator in testing survey instruments and sharing information.
- GTCC's students and former students, for whom the service is designed, and who provided data through responses to surveys.

Susan B. Nolan

Susan B. Nolan (Bruce)
Job Placement Coordinator

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INTRODUCTION

The North Carolina Community College System is committed to education for work. Through its 58 institutions, it brings job related training to more than one-half million individuals a year, with facilities within 30 miles of most of the state's citizens. Guilford Technical Community College (GTCC) is the system's third largest institution, with campuses in Jamestown, Greensboro and High Point.

GTCC's commitment to education for work is clearly stated in the following institutional goals:

> To provide vocational education to prepare students for entry level in skilled occupations.
>
> To provide technical education to prepare students for entry level jobs in business, industry, health, engineering and public service.
>
> To provide on-the-job educational experience, i.e., internships, apprenticeships, clinicals, practicums, cooperative education and technical scholars.
>
> To provide occupational updating and upgrading of skills for employees of business and industry.

An implication of these goals is that GTCC is committed to the successful transition of the student from the academic to the work setting. The emphasis of these goals is on job readiness. Determining how successful GTCC is in meeting those goals was a basis for this grant project.

As stated in the grant application, there is an institutional and state-wide need to systematically place and monitor graduates and early leavers in jobs for which they are being trained. There is also a need to compile and analyze the required curriculum and job related data to make this possible. So far, this activity has been attempted in many ways and

with varying degrees of success. Too often, institutions have been unable or unwilling to give adequate attention to this responsibility.

Currently there is no method in use by the Community College System that provides up-to-date and on-going job development and placement information. Instead, it relies on data compiled from a biennial Student Follow-Up Survey sent to many of the graduates and non-graduate former students to determine how well the community college is serving them. While the survey is invaluable in many respects, the results are not available for nearly a year after the survey is conducted. Moreover, even though a number of job-related questions are asked, none address themselves specifically to how these jobs were developed or obtained. Placement in a job related to the student's training is a major indicator of program effectiveness. Therefore, follow-up of graduates and former students is essential to program evaluation. To meet the dual challenge of placing and monitoring graduates and early leavers, a Central Job Development, Placement and Data Monitoring Unit was established at GTCC in February, 1984. The obvious purpose of the unit is to assist students in locating appropriate employment. Additionally, it collects and maintains verifiable student and former student employment data in a central office for quick access by the school.

This report will outline the goals of the grant project and the strategies developed to accomplish these goals. Particular attention will focus on results of surveys conducted as a part of the project. A copy of each survey is in the Procedures Manual, an addendum to this report.

PROJECT GOALS

With a focus on education for work and strong linkages between training and employment in the Community College System, an assumption is that the job placement function receives institutional support and enjoys high visibility on the 58 campuses. A survey conducted as part of this project draws an interesting picture of job placement in the system, a picture which negates the assumption just mentioned. Thirty-six institutions (62%) responded to the survey. At only five of those, the job placement function is the singular responsibility of a staff member. In most cases, job placement is one of several staff duties. Other responsibilities include recruitment and admissions, registration, testing, counseling, student activities, veterans affairs, cooperative education, records, alumni affairs, and teaching. Typically, the smaller the institution, the more responsibilities assigned to one individual. Even at GTCC, job placement was given only part-time staff support prior to the current project. An objective of this project was to demonstrate the effectiveness of a full service job placement program. It was determined that such a program would be centralized, would be reactive in attempts to fill job vacancies, would be proactive in job development activities, and would collect data related to jobs and placements. These characteristics translated into the following goals:

- To develop a model for a centralized job development, placement, and data monitoring unit that can be duplicated in whole or in part by other institutions within the Community College System.
- To find a reliable method of determining whether the Community College System is providing marketable skills to early leavers.
- To help in the development of institutional surveys related to curriculum, jobs and placements.

- To compile and analyze data relating to jobs and placements.
- To assist in evaluating the effectiveness of curriculum programs.

These goals could serve as a challange to any job placement program. Accomplishing some of them, particularly the evaluation of curriculum effectiveness, realistically requires more than 12 months of the grant period, but that period provided sufficient time to establish the mechanism for pursuing the goals.

The project addressed through its goals three distinct functions: (1) job placement and job development, (2) placement and employment monitoring, and (3) evaluation of curriculum effectiveness. The intent of inculding these functions is to suggest that they should be a part of a comprehensive job placement program.

STRATEGIES

The project goals formed the basis for activities for the Job Development, Placement, and Data Monitoring Unit, hereafter called Job Placement, during the grant period. The strategies developed to interpret the goals into action will be discussed goal by goal.

GOAL ONE: *To develop a model for a Centralized Job Development, Placement and Data Monitoring Unit that can be duplicated in all institutions of the Community College System.*

This goal does not imply that existing programs are inadequate. Rather, it mandates two aspects not found in typical job placement efforts in community colleges and technical institutes. Those are that the function be centralized and that it include a system for quantifying results. It is known that at GTCC and many other institutions, very effective job placement and development efforts occur in the curriculum departments. What is lacking in this method of service is a means to gather institutional data quickly on placements. The first goal sought to establish a centralized method for collecting, recording and maintaining job placement data. The emphasis was to be on centralizing the information about placements, not the function of placement. Careful orientation of faculty was planned to make this distinction and reassure staff that the new project was not intended to usurp any existing job development and placement activities.

The first goal was achieved through the following strategies:

1. Met with faculty and staff to orient them to the purpose of the project and to introduce the Job Placement Coordinator. These meetings were accomplished through an open house in the Job Placement office, presenta-

tions to department meetings, and distribution of a flyer to faculty.

2. Surveyed each institution in the Community College System regarding methods and effectiveness of job placement efforts. This strategy was to provide the basis for comparing the project program with existing services.

3. Re-evaluated past contractual ties between GTCC and the Greensboro and High Point Employment Security Commission offices for possible renewal. On two occasions in the past, job placement at GTCC was staffed on a part-time basis with local ESC personnel. Both times, the service was terminated because of changing ESC priorities. Relationships with the two offices remain good, with the managers from each serving on the project's Advisory Committee. It was determined that for the present the informal working arrangements serve all parties adequately. The option for formalizing the cooperative effort remains a possibility for the future. The successes of such a relationship at Davidson County Community College and Wayne Community College are evidence that contractual ties with ESC warrant consideration.

4. Established a network of information exchange with faculty. A variety of methods were tested to establish strong faculty contacts. The quickest way to reach the most students through faculty, it was determined, is the routine mailing of job notices through campus mail to the faculty in areas related to the job opportunity. Because faculty are often difficult to reach by phone, notices proved to be more reliable. The coordinator also sought opportunities to meet and work with faculty on campus committees and in classrooms, thus enhancing the relationships necessary for a strong job placement program. The coordinator is now

regularly called upon to make presentations in classes and to campus student groups.

5. Met regularly through professional associations with placement personnel from other institutions. Because the coordinator had four years' experience in job placement in North Carolina, a strong professional network was in place and invaluable in the project's success.
6. Developed a Procedures Manual. The manual was disseminated to the 57 other institutions in the Community College System at the end of the grant period. It is an addendum to this report.
7. Maintained a daily log of activities for documentation purposes.

These strategies put in place a comprehensive job placement office that is broader in services than most in the Community College System. The survey of other institutions revealed that most job placement efforts are hindered by limited institutional support. The results of a full-time office warrant consideration for expanding part-time services at other institutions. Placements increased 108% for the grant period over the preceding 12 month period. Job listings increased 85%, and student registrants, 96%.

GOAL TWO: *To develop an evaluation model to determine the success of the Community College System in providing true marketable skills for early leavers.*

Strategies for attempting this goal were:

1. The definition of an early leaver for purposes of this project. An early leaver was defined as a student who leaves before graduating but after completing at least one third of the courses in a specific program, not counting electives.

2. The selection of target programs to be surveyed. Eight curriculum programs were selected. (These are cited in the discussion of results section of this report.)
3. Developed and piloted a survey. The instrument is Appendix B.2 of the Procedures Manual.
4. Compiled, analyzed and shared the results of the pilot survey.

GOAL THREE: *To provide assistance in the development of institutional surveys related to curriculum, jobs and placements.*

This goal was achieved through the following stategies:

1. Worked with faculty, staff, students and employers to develop a graduate follow-up survey, a student employment survey, and an exit survey. These are Appendices B.3-5 of the Procedures Manual.
2. Tested the samples on target audiences. Results are discussed in the next section.
3. Made recommendations for regular institutional use of the survey instruments.

The purpose of these strategies was to actively seek information regarding curriculum effectiveness and to suggest approaches to job placement. Impacting curriculum content is not something that can or should occur in the grant period, but the surveys allow the institution to receive input from alumni and former students about how well the curriculum content prepared them for employment.

GOAL FOUR: *To compile and analyze institution data relating to jobs and placements.*

The strategies for this goal form the basis for the day to day operation

of the Job Placement office. These strategies translate into the routine acceptance of job orders from employers seeking part-time or full-time employees, the attempt to match these vacancies with appropriate candidates, and the referral of individuals to job opportunities. They also result in the job development efforts of the program. These strategies were:

1. Determined the classification of employers needing graduates and early leavers. This was accomplished through the review of data collected from a Business and Industry Needs Assessment and an Employer Survey conducted by the institution, by the collection of information from a Student Employment Survey, by the monitoring of job listings received by the office, and through review of labor market literature.
2. Determined the approximate number of students seeking work in specific fields. The office receives from Central Data Processing a list of students by curriculum. Student resumes are maintained by curriculum program. Both activities allow the office to monitor the number of potential candidates for specific positions. An additional activity to be implemented in the near future is the routine referral of graduation applications to Job Placement, allowing Job Placement to contact those students who have not already used the services of the office.
3. Determined upon receipt of a job listing the appropriate programs to be notified about the opportunity. This forms the basis for the job matching aspect of the program.
4. Collected from the departments information to supplement the data collected through the graduate follow-up survey, and shared with the departments the results of the follow-up survey.

A result of the close monitoring of labor market information and the numbers of students in specific curriculum areas is that recommendations can be made regarding the size of limited enrollment programs. The information collected on the need for electronics graduates contributed to the decision to expand that program's ceiling on admissions. Another bonus to the collection and sharing of information is that faculty relationships with job placement are enhanced. With a posture of working cooperatively with faculty to assist students, and not taking full credit for placement activities, job placement has been able to collect a more comprehensive picture of institutional success with job placement. Job Placement has also been able to identify and refer to the Cooperative Education program many jobs which were subsequently filled by a coop student.

GOAL FIVE: *To assist instructional departments in evaluating program effectiveness.*

As has already been stated, this goal requires more time than the 12 month grant period to be realized. However, through the development and conducting of survey, and through the sharing of survey data, Job Placement will play a part in future recommendations regarding curriculum programs. It is the recommendation of the coordinator that attention first be given to establishing strong working relationships with faculty before attempting to make comments about program effectiveness.

SURVEY RESULTS

Basic to this project is the concept that a comprehensive job placement program must include regular and aggressive documentation of placement activities. Surveys are an effective means of follow-up and were a focus of the project.

Various departments in the institution conduct surveys as needed. The Cooperative Education program, Technical Scholars, Development Office, the Title III office, and academic departments each are involved with surveying graduates and employers. The challenge of a job placement program is to be aware of institutional survey activities to avoid duplication, and to share results of any surveys conducted by job placement with appropriate personnel.

The surveys developed and piloted in the project year were all paper instruments, not telephone or interview surveys. With the exception of the Exit Survey, which is completed at time of withdrawal from school, all the surveys were administered by mail. A sample of each appears in the Procedures Manual. The purpose and results of the Early Leavers, Graduate, Employer and Exit surveys will be discussed in this section.

Early Leavers Survey

In an attempt to determine the success of the Community College System in providing true marketable skills for early leavers, 718 former Guilford Technical Community College students were surveyed in August, 1984. The survey population included those individuals enrolled in eight target curriculum areas who had completed at least one-third of the program requirements, not including electives, but who did not graduate. The institution's

data base allowed for indentification of individuals enrolled anytime between 1976 and the first quarter of 1984 who met that criteria.

The target curricula and the number surveyed in each were:

Architectural Technology	62
Business Administration	343
General Office Technology	75
Industrial Maintenance	29
Industrial Management	75
Machinist	38
Secretarial Science - Executive	62
Secretarial Science - Medical	34

Sixteen percent (16%) of those surveyed responded, even though a follow-up mailing was conducted to encourage more response. The percentage response for each curriculum area was: Architectural Technology, 16%; Business Administration, 15%; General Office Technology, 13%; Industrial Maintenance, 14%; Industrial Management, 13%, Machinist, 24%; Secretarial Science - Executive, 21%; Secretarial Science - Medical, 12%. Two curriculum areas, Electronics Engineering Technology and Mechanical Drafting, were represented by individual respondents who changed programs from one of the eight target curricula. Their responses are included in the totals.

The survey collected information in three categories: Employment Data, Enrollment and Course Data, and Support and Auxiliary Services. A list of employers, product lines and job titles was collected from over 100 of the 113 respondents, representing a diversity in employment situations for the early leavers.

In answering questions regarding employment data, only 13% of those surveyed felt the course work completed at GTCC was not related to their current jobs. One-third considered the courses somewhat related; 29%, closely

related; and 20%, directly related. Just over one-half, 53%, considered the course work very useful to their jobs. When asked "How helpful to your current job would it be for you to continue taking courses in the same program?", 19% responded Very helpful and important; 23%, Helpful and somewhat important; 34% Helpful but not important; and 19%, Not helpful.

The employment status when entering GTCC was 42% full-time, 35% part-time, and 26% unemployed. Approximately one-fourth currently hold the same job as when they entered GTCC. Of the 67% who are in different jobs, the majority, 58%, did not change as a result of what was learned in course work at GTCC. Twenty percent of the respondents credited the course work for subsequent promotions.

In gauging employer support of attendance at GTCC, one-third indicated their employers were unaware of their attending, while 12% received financial assistance from the employer to attend. Of the 21% who indicated "Other" as a response to employer support, two reasons predominated: either the individual was not employed while in school, or attending did not impact the employer in any way.

Only six percent did not respond to the question on earnings. One-fourth earn between $10,001 and $15,000 yearly, while another one-fourth earn between $15,001 and $25,000. Four individuals reported income over $50,000 per year, and one earns in excess of $100,000.

Questions on enrollment and course data showed that more than one-half, 56%, of those surveyed feel it is important for someone in jobs similar to theirs to have a degree, diploma or certificate. Then why did these individuals not persist to the completion of their programs? Forty-three percent indicated they either found jobs or changed jobs or job schedules. An equal percentage

gave "Other" reasons, including moving, transferring to a school with more night offerings, and personal (marriage, children, illness, etc.). Only 6% said they learned all that was needed and 4% left because of dissatisfaction with the courses or instruction.

Response to the quality of instruction was very positive: 16% superior, 50% very good, 24% good. Course content received similar high marks: 11% superior, 53% very good, 28% good.

More "day only" students, 47%, responded to the survey than did "evening only" students, 30%. The remainder took a combination of day and evening courses.

When asked about plans to re-enroll, 43% have no plans to do so, and 25% are undecided. The others will re-enroll in a same or different program, or will re-enroll, but not at GTCC.

Of particular interest is the response of 62% of the early leavers to the question of what schedule is best suited to them. This large majority prefer an evening schedule. Many reinforced this response by writing comments about the lack of evening courses being a major factor in their leaving GTCC.

Questions regarding support and auxiliary services listed the following services for rating from inferior to superior: Admissions, Advising, Bookstore, Cafeteria, Counseling, Financial Aid, Job Placement, Learning Resource Center, Student Records, Registration (Advanced and Regular), Student Activities, Veterans. Most responses of service users were positive (good to very good), but more than 65% did not use the Financial Aid or Job Placement services. This strongly supports the need addressed by the project to establish a comprehensive job placement program.

Almost 20% of the respondents added comments to the survey. Some spoke

very highly of their GTCC experiences, praising both curriculum and instructors. Others criticized the lack of individualized attention and "self-paced" instruction. Several cited limited evening offerings as a problem. One said he felt his leaving was "good riddance" since the survey was the only contact with him since not returning.

Most of the early leavers responding expressed positive feelings about GTCC courses, services and preparation for employment. If the 16% respondents can be considered a representative sample, then the following points are prominent:

*The course work at GTCC is useful or necessary to the jobs of early leavers.

*More evening offerings are desired by this population.

*Quicker follow-up on early leavers may result in their re-enrolling.

*Support and Auxiliary Services should be available to evening students.

Graduate Survey

The survey of graduates was conducted by the office of Student Activities and Alumni Affairs for 11 years prior to this project. Job Placement piloted a new instrument, surveying the 1984 graduates of 10 programs. When results were received from graduates, the non-respondents were identified. The survey results were shared with appropriate faculty, and they were asked to provide information on those who did not respond. This procedure yielded a 70% response rate for the survey, with no follow-up mailing. The survey was conducted in December, 1984; commencement for the 1984 class was in August. Sample N = 162; response N = 113.

Employer Survey

Because the President's office and the Title III office each conducted extensive employer surveys within the project period, it was determined that to duplicate these contacts with a Job Placement survey was inappropriate. Therefore, the employer survey developed focused on collecting information about employment opportunities for students still in school. The survey was sent to a sample of just over 200 employers who had not used the Job Placement office as source of candidates for vacancies. The survey was mailed with a job listing form. While the response was under 20%, the mailing produced several job listings and was considered a worthwhile marketing activity for the office.

NOTE: Examples of the other institutional employer surveys, while not developed or conducted by Job Placement, are included in the Procedures Manual.

Exit Survey

The Exit Survey was developed in collaboration with the Recruitment and Retention Coordinator, and is an outgrowth of the Early Leavers Survey. If the institution can quickly follow-up with the student who does not re-enroll, or with the student who withdraws from school, perhaps re-enrollment will occur. A method is currently being developed to identify and contact students who do not re-enroll with a letter and survey sent jointly from Enrollment Services and Job Placement.

IMPLICATIONS

The experiences of the project reinforce that a comprehensive job placement program should include the functions of job development and placement, placement and employment monitoring, and evaluation of program effectiveness. Also recognized is that basic to the success of the program are the relationships established between the program and other campus components. Time should be spent establishing and enhancing strong working relationships, since job placement cannot work in isolation. It requires strong liaison with instruction, student services, admissions, central data processing, as well as strong linkages with the employing community.

Procedurally Job Placement will continue to operate at GTCC with an emphasis on the three functions cited above. Modifications will be made to the Early Leaver Survey, to shorten the instrument and to administer it in a more timely manner. It remains to be determined whether Job Placement will share responsibility for administration of the survey, but it has been established that on-going follow-up of early leavers will occur.

The Graduate Survey has been modified, to shorten it to a one page, front and back, format and to make it machine readable. It has been recommended that Job Placement assume responsibility for administering the annual survey of graduates.

When other departments are not conducting employer needs assessments, Job Placement will be responsible for that activity. Institutional coordination of information is a direct payoff of this project.

SUMMARY

Job placement exists in the North Carolina Community College System, but that existence is frequently in spite of inadequate support. It has already been cited that only five of the 58 institutions support job placement as a full-time responsibility for a staff member. When personnel responsible for job placement were asked in a recent survey "What factors prevent success in your job placement program?", universal responses were lack of time, staff and administrative support. When asked "In your opinion, what is/are the major factor(s) contributing to the success of job placement at your institution?", the majority of responses cited good communication and strong relationships with faculty, employers and students. Quick response to employer needs and the institution's reputation were other positive factors. These were confirmed in the current project.

That job placement functions in the state's Community College System in spite of handicaps is a credit to the personnel involved. But too often, because of inadequate staff or institutional support, placement occurs haphazardly, with little effort to document results or analyze the rate of placements and the implications to program evaluation. Because an accountability system greatly enhances program security, follow-up is important to job placement. Follow-up positions job placement to receive information valuable to many audiences. Job placement data should be available to recruitment and admissions personnel, to faculty, to counselors, to the Board and administration, and certainly to students. Analysis of job development and placement data is important to curriculum development and evaluation. These factors make job placement an important conduit of

information between the training community and employment community. Viewed in this light, job placement is part of a continuum that begins with recruitment of a student and ends with an evaluation of how well the institution met its goal of education for job readiness. The indicator of that success is placement of that student in a job appropriate to his/her training. This positioning of job placement would never consider the function to be an adjunct service. Rather, job placement is a basic component of the institution, deserving of institutional support, and indicative of institutional effectiveness.

DISSEMINATION

A report on the activities and results of this project were shared with colleagues by a variety of methods. These include:

- A presentation, "Marketing your Career Planning and Placement Services on Campus," at the 1984 North Carolina Placement Association Conference, May, 1984.
- A presentation, "Marketing your Student Employment Program," at the National Association of Student Employment Administrators Convention, November, 1984.
- A presentation, "Accountability in Career Planning and Placement," at the 1985 North Carolina Placement Association Conference, May, 1985.
- Three workshops for placement personnel in the Community College System. These were held at Wilson County Technical Institute, Catawba Valley Technical College, and Guilford Technical Community College.
- Distribution of a procedures manual to placement personnel at all institutions in the Community College System.
- Publication of this report for distribution by the Department of Community Colleges.

In addition to these activities, the Advisory Board for Job Placement met on December 8, 1983; March 29 and October 9, 1984; and January 21, 1985 for status reports on the project.